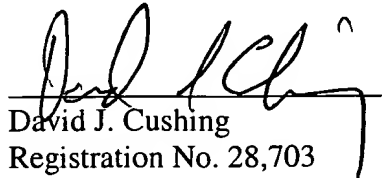that it was sponsored by webMethods, Inc. and prepared by Joe Lapp. The entire content of this chapter of the book was indeed written by Joe Lapp, one of the named inventors herein, and was written at a time after the present invention was invented and reflects the collective contribution of all three of the named inventors of the present application. Submitted herewith is a Declaration by Mr. Lapp to this effect. It is believed that this suffices to disqualify Goldfarb et al as 102(a) prior art relative to the claims of the present application, and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Finally, in continuation of applicants' duty of disclosure, the undersigned submits here a publication located in the files of the undersigned. It is not believed to teach the specific features recited in any of claims 125-179, but consideration of the reference is nonetheless respectfully requested. If any fee under 37 CFR 1.17(p) is due, please charge this to Deposit Account 19-4880. If withdrawal of finality of the previous Office action is necessary for consideration of this reference, such withdrawal is respectfully requested in that the Office action included a new ground of rejection of all claims which could not have been necessitated by any amendments made to the claims.

In view of the above, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

If there are any issues remaining which the examiner believes could be resolved through an Examiner's Amendment or a Supplemental Response, the examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the local exchange indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: March 20, 2003

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element type name (e.g., NULL or OBJECT) that designates a placeholder element which represents the absence of data; and

transmitting said service invocation request message from said second machine.

115. A method of invoking a service at a first machine, comprising the steps of:

receiving at said first machine a service invocation request message generated at a second machine in compliance with a markup language-based message encoding, wherein each element in said message is associated with an element type name selected from a group of names, said group of names including at least one placeholder element type name (e.g., NULL or OBJECT) that designates a placeholder element which represents the absence of data; and
invoking said service in response to said message.

116. A method of invoking a service at a first machine, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving at said first machine a service invocation request;
invoking said service in response to said request; and
transmitting from said first machine a service invocation reply message in compliance with a markup language-based message encoding, wherein each element in said message is associated with an element type name selected from a group of names, said group of names including at least one placeholder element type name (e.g., NULL or OBJECT) that designates a placeholder element which represents the absence of data; and

transmitting said service invocation reply message from said second machine.

117. A method of invoking a service at a first machine, said method comprising the steps of:

transmitting a service invocation request from a second machine; and